



Cedre NEWSLETTER

A monthly publication
by the Centre of Documentation, Research and
Experimentation on Accidental Water Pollution

N° 180 E – News from May 2010

Emergency response

This month, we continued to closely monitor the operations and consequences of the major accident involving the oil rig *Deepwater Horizon*. Contacts were established to identify what contributions *Cedre* could make to possibly reinforce the crisis management effort (detailed article below).

Our Emergency Response team was called upon by the fire brigade for Loire-Atlantique, and conducted a risk assessment for the hazardous substances present on board the container ship *Sabrina* which grounded when leaving Montoir port. The vessel was refloated within a few hours. The fire brigade for Indre-et-Loire requested *Cedre's* assistance following the pollution of a stream resulting in fish mortality due to the release of effluent containing a flocking agent used by wastewater treatment plants.

Cedre was also mobilised as part of several exercises this month:

- simulation of a collision between a fishing boat and an oil tanker organised by a charterer to test the ship manager's response capacity.
- Polmar Atlantique HNS 2010 exercise, organised by the French maritime authorities for the Atlantic coastline. An agent from *Cedre* joined the "products-risk" unit, and *Cedre's* response centre was activated as a focal point of the **MAR-ICE** network. For this exercise, a manufacturer was also called upon and his opinion taken into account in the risk assessment.

The response centre received several enquiries, in particular in relation to ground polluted by previous accidents, as well as about a "mistaken pollution" incident, raising concerns in the Chausey Islands (Channel). The "pollution" was in fact peat.

Mont-Lacq: Cedre Strategic Committee meeting

The 31st session meeting of the *Cedre* Strategic Committee was held on 20 May near Pau, upon invitation by the Environment department of Total's Mont-Lacq R&D branch (PRDML). The committee members were able to discover this department's activities in terms of the treatment, quality control and impact of industrial waste waters, as well as to visit its experimental pilot river site. The meeting was also the opportunity for exchanges on the direction of *Cedre's* activities towards themes considered as priorities, so as to optimise resource management and investments. It was also the last meeting chaired by Mr Clément Lavigne, who has been called to other responsibilities within the Total group, and the committee warmly thanked him for his remarkable work as their President.

Symposium on the 'politics and sciences of the sea'

The symposium "Politiques et sciences de la mer" was organised in La Baule on 17 and 18 May by **CNRS's** research centre on political action in Europe, **ONEMA**, **Ifremer** and the French Marine Protected Areas Agency as part of the Liteau programme. This symposium, supported by the French ministry for the environment, **MEEDDM**, was organised as part of the European Day of the Sea on 20 May. The Director of *Cedre* took part in this event, giving a presentation on the importance of observation and surveillance in the management of operational and accidental marine pollution.

OTSOPA 2010

The meeting of the Bonn Agreement working group **OTSOPA** for the protection of the North Sea was held in Antwerp from 25 to 28 May 2010, hosted by the Belgian authorities. The 25 representatives of the member States along with guest speakers discussed technical and strategic aspects of pollution response in the North Sea. To reinforce its action, the Bonn Agreement, which recently celebrated its 40th anniversary and has lately added Ireland to its list of members, is organising a ministerial meeting to be held in Dublin in late November 2010. The highlight of this meeting will be the final adoption of the 2010-2013 Bonn Agreement Action Plan, BAAP, which provides a strategic approach in

terms of pollution prevention, preparedness and response in the North Sea. The adoption of this action plan will be accompanied by the signing of a ministerial declaration (the Dublin Declaration). In the action plan, priority is given to response to hazardous and noxious substances.

Polmar training course in the Bouches-du-Rhône area

On Monday 3 May, at the Préfecture for the Bouches-du-Rhône, *Cedre* took part in a meeting to inform local councillors on the Polmar system currently under revision in the area. This information day, intended for different public and private stakeholders, was followed by 2 days of theory training and a day of equipment handling at the Polmar stockpile in Port-de-Bouc. This training, organised by the *DDTM* for the Bouches-du-Rhône and jointly run by *Cedre* and *Cetmef*, gathered 39 representatives of State services, local authorities and industry, who were thus able to set up a network to be drawn upon in the event of a spill.

Training in Andalusia

As part of a training cycle on accidental marine pollution, organised by the government-owned company EGMASA (The Environmental Management Company) and UCA (University of Cadiz), two engineers were sent to Andalusia from 17 to 21 May to give four days of theory lessons (two in Seville and two in Cadiz) on response strategies on land and shoreline clean-up techniques. Each session gathered some forty participants from the *Consejería de Medio Ambiente de la Junta de Andalucía* (Spanish ministry for the environment), EGMASA, UCA, the natural parks of Andalusia and TRAGSA (government-owned company in charge of emergency spill response). Two weeks of practical training are due to be held in November and December.

Berlin: Migr'hycar artificial river trials

Within the context of the Migr'hycar research project, funded by the French National Research Agency (ANR), with support from *ADEME*, as part of the PRECODD 2008 programme, an engineer from *Cedre* was sent to Berlin to take part in the experimental phase piloted by Véolia and conducted in artificial rivers managed by UBA (Umweltbundesamt). During these preliminary trials, different refined products (domestic fuel, petrol, kerosene and fuel oil) were released so as to track slick movements at the water surface and estimate the pollutant transfer rate into the water column by dissolution.

1st Oil Spill Conference in Croatia

The head of the Spill Follow-up Department took part in the first Adriatic Oil Spill Conference, held in Opatija (Croatia), from 12 to 14 May, where he gave 3 presentations on the current situation and innovations in terms of chemical dispersion and shoreline clean-up. This conference was organised by the Croatian Oil Spill Education Centre (OSEC) with support from IMO, *Rempec*, the *IOPC Funds*, *EMSA*, *ITOPF* and *Cedre*, and attracted around one hundred delegates, mainly from the Adriatic region. A number of response companies and response equipment and product manufacturers took this opportunity to exhibit their products and services. The next edition is due to be held in 2013.

Gulf of Mexico: sinking of *Deepwater Horizon* oil rig (cont.)

For over a month now, the consequences of the accident involving the oil rig *Deepwater Horizon* in the Gulf of Mexico has been making the headlines. An impressive array of response techniques and equipment has been deployed since the incident on 20 April, but the spill continues to extend relentlessly. Despite a massive dispersant spraying operation, a hundred kilometres of beaches and 12 hectares of marshland were oiled in Louisiana from 25 May. Florida could be affected soon.

At a depth of 1,500 m, spill response is a complex operation. After a failed attempt to plug the main leak using a containment chamber, a pipe was successfully inserted into the end of the riser lying on the seafloor, recovering 60% of the oil and channelling it to the surface onto a vessel. This encouraging result was rapidly dampened by the failure of the 'top kill' operation, which consisted of injecting heavy drilling fluids directly into the wellhead. The emerging oil flow proved to be too powerful for the plugging system to effectively stop the flow.

Meanwhile, two drilling rigs were sent onsite to dig two relief wells to join the main well. Cement filler is then hoped to be injected to definitively plug the leaking well. This type of operation is long and extremely tricky as it requires almost surgical precision. For comparison, in 2009 it took two and a half months to neutralise the leak on a rig in the *Timor Sea*.

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